

WASHINGTON, DC— With the findings of a new study in hand, today, Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-WI), in a letter to the leaders of the House Armed Services Committee, called upon the committee to aggressively respond to the troubling incidence and prevalence of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among American soldiers in its FY-2009 Defense Authorization Bill. Starting this week six House Armed Services subcommittees are beginning to write this bill in a series of sessions called mark-ups.

“I know [the committee] shares my concerns about ensuring that all soldiers and veterans including those who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan receive needed treatment for PTSD or other conditions they may be experiencing,” said Congresswoman Moore. “A number of reports, including a recent extensive study by the RAND Corporation, continue to highlight this problem as well as the costs to our country and military of not aggressively tackling identified barriers to care.”

The RAND report Rep. Moore referenced found that those who had separated from the service had “significantly higher risk for mental health problems.” It also detailed shocking findings as to the lack of adequate treatment available.

Moore, an outspoken advocate for American soldiers suffering from PTSD, met with Col. Elspeth Ritchie, psychiatric consultant to the Army surgeon general, last fall to discuss this issue in addition to writing the committee previously to lobby for additional funding and more oversight from Congress for the mental health treatment of soldiers.

In her letter, Rep. Moore identified what she calls the “four significant barriers” many veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan face in being properly diagnosed and treated.

“According to the Department of Defense’s mental health task force there is a stigma in the military that prevents service members from seeking needed care,” stated Moore. “Many soldiers who need care are reluctant to seek it because of fear of negative career repercussions. Service members and veterans need ways to obtain confidential services without fear of adverse consequences.”

In addition to combating the barriers of stigma, fully staffed and trained health care providers, inappropriate discharges and oversight, Rep. Moore in her letter asked for increase in funding for the Army to hire more professionals who can properly treat soldiers suffering from PTSD.

The RAND study found that nearly 1 in 5 American soldiers are returning home with either PTSD, depression, or both. That would mean 300,000 returned soldiers so far. The desperate need for a more robust mental health provider network is also underscored by the RAND finding

that of those returning soldiers who had PTSD or depression and who sought treatment, only slightly over half received at least minimally adequate treatment.

Rep. Moore is seeking to ensure sufficient resources and direction are provided in FY-2009 that makes clear that the implementation of such a policy is a priority and should be fully and fairly implemented to protect American soldiers who are in need of mental health services.

As the House Armed Services prepares to mark-up the Defense Authorization Bill of FY 2009, Moore is fighting to ensure that Congress commits to the mental well-being of American Soldiers.

"We have to do better for our young men and women fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. I know the Committee shares my desire to ensure that our soldiers receive the appropriate care at the appropriate time," stated Rep. Moore.

*Please click [here](#) to read the letter Congresswoman Moore's letter to the House Armed Services committee.*

*Please click [here](#) to read the RAND Corporations report entitled ["Invisible Wounds: Mental Health and Cognitive Care Needs of America's Returning Veterans \(2008\)"](#);*

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